

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USMISSION USUN
USCINCEUR
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR TU GR
SUBJ: TURKISH MANEUVERS IN THE AEGEAN

REF: ATHENS 1505 (NOTAL) DTG 181645Z FEB 76

1. THE TURKISH GENERAL STAFF (TGS) RELEASED A STATEMENT
FEBRUARY 18 SAYING THAT "TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT AND NAVAL
EXERCISES WILL BE HELD IN THE INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND
AIRSPACE OF THE AEGEAN SEA BY TURKISH NAVAL AND AIR FORCES
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ON FEBRUARY 25-26" (REFTEL). THE STATEMENT CHARACTERIZED

THE EXERCISES AS BEING PART OF THE "PLANNED NATIONAL EXERCISES" WHICH HAVE "NOTHING TO DO WITH NATO." THE STATEMENT CONTINUED, "AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS, THE SAME TYPE OF NATIONAL EXERCISES WERE PROGRAMMED AND EXECUTED IN THE AEGEAN. NATO AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT SO FAR PROPOSED LIMITATIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON NATIONAL EXERCISES." THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT GENERAL HAIG'S FEB. 13' MEETING WITH TGS CHIEF SANCAR HAD BEEN A "NORMAL", ROUTINE" VISIT AND THE SUBJECT OF AEGEAN EXERCISES HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED.

2. THE TGS HAS MADE NO ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE AREA OF THE EXERCISE BUT HAS CONFIRMED TO OUR DAO THAT THE COORDINATES PUBLISHED IN ATHENS ATC NOTAM'S OF FEBRUARY 4 AND 5 WERE CORRECT. (THESE PLACE THE EXERCISE NORTH AND WEST OF LESBOS). THE TGS ALSO TOLD THE DAO THAT IT HAD NO INTENTION OF MAKING FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLINED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXERCISE.

3. COMMENT: IT APPEARS TO US THAT THE TURKISH EXERCISE HAS POTENTIAL FOR ANOTHER GREEK-TURKISH CONFRONTATION. THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN INCIDENT OCCURRING WILL BE HEIGHTENED IF THE GREEK AIR FORCE ALSO IS CONDUCTING MANEUVERS IN THE SAME AREA, AS STATED IN A FEBRUARY 19 GUNAYDIN ARTICLE FROM ATHENS BASED ON GREEK PRESS REPORTS. PAST EXERCISES PRESENT A MIXED PICTURE: THE MARCH, 1975 MANEUVERS WENT OFF SMOOTHLY WITH NO REPORTED INCIDENTS; HOWEVER, IN 1974 THERE WERE SEVERAL ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF GREEK AIRSPACE WHICH COULD HAVE PROVOKED A CONFRONTATION.

4. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, AS REGARDS THE UPCOMING EXERCISE:

(A) THE GOT HAS MADE NO DECLARATION OF INTENT TO CONDUCT EXERCISES WITHIN THE TEN MILE AIRSPACE LIMITATION CLAIMED BY GREECE ALTHOUGH THE GOT NO LONGER RECOGNIZES THE TEN MILE ZONE. HOWEVER, A PORTION OF EXERCISE AREA OUTLINED BY THE NOTAM COMES TO WITHIN SIX MILES OF WESTERN COAST OF LESBOS.

(B) ALTHOUGH ATHENS NOTAM STATES THAT AIRPLANES SHOULD APPROACH NO CLOSER THAN TEN MILES, THE TURKS HAVE NOT RPT NOT
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RESPONDED BY ISSUING THEIR OWN NOTAM DECLARING A SIX MILE LIMIT AS THEY DID IN 1975, THUS SUGGESTING THE POSSIBILITY OF A TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF GREEK TEN MILE LIMIT.

5. THE FORTHCOMING EXERCISES HAVE RECEIVED SCANT COVERAGE IN THE TURKISH PRESS, BUT IF THE SIX VS. TEN MILE LIMIT BECOMES A MAJOR STORY, THE GOT PROBABLY WILL COME UNDER PRESSURE NOT TO ACCEDE TO THE TEN MILE LIMIT.

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